

**Draft Summary of the Environmental Work Group Meeting
Oroville Facilities Relicensing (FERC Project No. 2100)
November 20, 2002**

The Department of Water Resources (DWR) hosted a meeting for the Environmental Work Group on November 20, 2002 in Oroville.

A summary of the discussion, decisions made, and action items is provided below. This summary is not intended to be a transcript, analysis of the meeting, or to indicate agreement or disagreement with any of the items summarized, except where expressly stated. The intent is to present a summary for interested parties who could not attend the meeting. The following are attachments to this summary:

Attachment 1	Meeting Agenda
Attachment 2	Meeting Attendees
Attachment 3	Flip Chart Notes
Attachment 4	SP-W3, Task 1A Interim Report
Attachment 5	SP-T2 Progress Summary
Attachment 6	SP-F2, Phase 1 Interim Progress Report
Attachment 7	Phase 1 Interim Literature Review for SP-F9 Evaluation of Project Effects on Natural Salmonid Populations
Attachment 8	Quarterly Reports: SP-W5 and SP-W7 with map showing locations of Thermalito Afterbay Groundwater Monitoring Wells
Attachment 9	Tentative Study Plan Interim Reports Schedule for December 2002 and January 2003
Attachment 10	PM&E Development Process

I. Introduction

Attendees were welcomed to the Environmental Work Group meeting. Attendees introduced themselves and their affiliations. The desired outcomes of the meeting were discussed as listed on the meeting agenda. The meeting agenda and list of meeting attendees are appended to this summary as Attachments 1 and 2, respectively. Meeting flip chart notes are included as Attachment 3.

II. Action Items – September 25, 2002 Environmental Work Group Meeting

A summary of the September 25, 2002 Environmental Work Group meeting is posted on the relicensing web site. The Facilitator reviewed the status of action items from that meeting as follows:

Action Item #E57:	Arrange for a presentation by Bill Mendenhall on Data Management and GIS layer development and availability.
Responsible:	DWR
Status:	The Facilitator indicated that a presentation by a member of Bill Mendenhall's staff is scheduled for later in this meeting under agenda item titled "Data Management Presentation and Discussion" and deferred further discussion until that time (see summary below).
Action Item #E58:	Provide comments on two fisheries reports to Michael Perrone.
Responsible:	Environmental Work Group participants
Status:	Michael Perrone with DWR acknowledged receipt of some comments on the two documents and reported that the suggestions, primarily focused on future reporting, would be incorporated in the next set of reports.
Action Item #59:	Develop a large regional map with color-coded identification of other projects to be considered in cumulative analysis.
Responsible:	DWR

Status:

Large maps have been developed and were placed on display to be discussed later in the meeting under the agenda item titled "Cumulative Issues Discussion" (see summary below).

III. Update on Plenary Group Actions

The Facilitator updated the participants on Plenary Group actions taken during their recent meeting held on November 19, 2002. She reported that the Plenary Group discussions focused largely on the work to be done by the Process Task Force that has been charged with developing a framework for Protection, Mitigation, and Enhancement measures (PM&Es) along with screening criteria for PM&Es to be used by the individual Work Groups, and settlement negotiation protocols. The Plenary Group also continued their discussion on the contents of Scoping Document 2 and heard a fisheries presentation by Terry Mills, Michael Perrone, and Eric See of DWR that outlined ongoing studies and studies initiated by the relicensing process to address fisheries issues within the Oroville Reservoir and downstream in the Feather River. The Facilitator reported that the planned Flood Management presentation was postponed due to the decision by the Army Corps of Engineers not to participate. Ward Tabor told the Plenary that he expects the Flood Management presentation to occur at either the December or January Plenary Group meeting and is hopeful that the COE will be prepared to present information on flood management in the Feather River watershed under their jurisdiction at that time.

IV. Study Deliverables and Implementation Updates***SP-W3***

Steve Ford with DWR reported that Jerry Boles, DWR's water quality study lead was ill and unable to attend the Environmental Work Group meeting to discuss progress related to the water quality studies however, 'SP-W3, Task 1A Interim Report' was provided to the participants and comments solicited. No comments were made at the meeting but Steve invited participants to provide written comments to him on the report that would be forwarded to Jerry for discussion at the next Environmental Work Group meeting. The SP-W3 Interim Report is provided as Attachment 4 to this summary.

SP-T2

Dave Bogener, DWR's Terrestrial study lead distributed and reviewed a document titled 'SP-T2 Progress Summary'. The summary document covers tasks 1,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,11, and 12 and is provided as Attachment 5 to this summary. Dave reminded participants that while ESA species surveys have been conducted for the study area, habitat locations are not identified in the report due to species protection sensitivities. Dave also pointed out that this progress summary only covered his finding on wildlife species and not plant species. He added that activities related to Study Plan T2 would continue through July 2003.

SP-F2

Mary Lou Keefe, consultant team study lead for SP-F2 reviewed the document titled 'SP-F2, Phase 1 Interim Progress Report' distributed to the Environmental Work Group participants and provided as Attachment 6 to this summary. She reminded the participants that the objective of this study is to evaluate the present and ongoing impacts of fish diseases in the study area and identified IHN as the most significant disease in the Feather River system. She identified two data gaps that she is currently addressing: 1) the contribution to disease transmission of the 'put and take' rainbow trout fishery in the Forebay; and 2) other diseases that may be active within the Oroville system for which insufficient information is available.

Eric Theiss representing National Marine Fisheries Services (NMFS) asked that statements contained within the report suggesting success in dealing with IHN outbreaks be clarified. Mary Lou agreed to be more specific in the next report. Anna Kastner representing California

Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) reported that the Feather River Hatchery plans to install a pre-filter this season to the UV filter currently in place at the hatchery and clarified that the UV filter only deals with *Ceratomyxa shasta* (*C. shasta*), the causative agent of ceratomyxosis and not with IHN. Eric See with DWR added that the filter system would only cover selected raceways at the hatchery.

SP-F9

Randy Brown, DWR study lead for SP-F9 distributed and reviewed a document titled 'Phase 1 Interim Literature Review for SP-F9 Evaluation of Project Effects on Natural Salmonid Populations' (provided as Attachment 7 to this summary). He explained that there is a very large amount of information available on hatcheries so he has been selective in his review, concentrating on literature relevant to issues of concern with Feather River Hatchery impacts. He also noted that the Feather River Hatchery management practices are not very comparable to other hatcheries that have been studied and acknowledged that those management practices will certainly change in the future. The participants discussed the need to coordinate activities associated with the relicensing effort to those ongoing efforts by other agencies, including DWR, CDFG, and NMFS related to management of the Feather River Hatchery and other Central Valley hatcheries. Eric Theiss expressed his concern that issues and studies not be deflected to those other efforts. Steve Ford responded that DWR was interested in coordinating with those other efforts to eliminate duplicative studies and to allow all of the agencies to benefit from each others' ongoing and existing study efforts to address the larger system-wide questions such as straying within Central Valley streams.

Eric Theiss asked for a more exhaustive literature review to include some of the literature considered important by NMFS including that contained on a web site for a group called Long Live The Kings, www.lltk.org/hatcheryreform.html. Randy indicated that he was familiar with the references Eric cited but had chosen not to include them for the reasons expressed earlier. Chuck Hanson representing the State Water Contactors suggested that the importance of a literature review is to learn the key issues and the approaches used by others in addressing issues of relevance to this study. He asked that the literature review not be viewed as a product but rather as a process to help guide the rest of the study efforts. Randy Brown responded that such an approach was his intention.

Randy Brown requested that participants submit written comments on the literature review by December 20th, 2002. He also informed the Environmental Work Group that a non-relicensing meeting related to hatchery management this week would include a presentation on hatchery returns cohort analysis for all Central Valley hatcheries and information on straying rates with suggestions to improve monitoring for future tag recovery efforts. A separate report on IHN is also scheduled for that meeting. Randy agreed to provide information from that meeting to the Environmental Work Group.

Steve Ford reported on the technical input meetings and dispute resolution process intended to address NMFS' unresolved issues related to SP-F9. He told the Environmental Work Group that it was his understanding that several meetings conducted between DWR and NMFS technical staff and upper management have resulted in resolution of the remaining NMFS issues. The Facilitator added that Rick Ramirez with DWR had reported similar results to the Plenary Group meeting the night before and informed the group that a letter outlining the resolutions had been drafted and forwarded to NMFS for review and concurrence. Eric Theiss responded that NMFS is currently reviewing the letter and felt that as long as DWR remained strong in their commitment to solve these issues, NMFS would be happy.

SP-G1 and SP-G2

The Facilitator reported that a joint Environmental/Engineering and Operations Task Force meeting had been held to discuss the proposed use of Fluvial 12 to model geomorphic processes within the study area. The Task Force was comfortable with the planned use of Fluvial 12 for geomorphic studies and confirmed that a 2.5-year return flow input, common in bankfull investigations but not appropriate for the Feather River, will not be used in the Fluvial 12 modeling effort.

SP-W5 and SP-W7

Ted Alvarez with DWR distributed and reviewed a quarterly progress report covering SP-W5 and SP-W7 that included a map of Thermalito Afterbay Groundwater Monitoring Wells locations (provided as Attachment 8 to this summary). He explained that the existing wells are insufficient to determine groundwater effects from the Afterbay and Forebay for SP-W5 so the installation of additional monitoring wells is planned in the spring. He also reported that the November completion date for SP-W7's report discussing land uses and management activities and their potential effects on water quality had been delayed due to staffing shortages but the problem has been resolved and approval to hire student assistants has been received. Interviews are currently underway with the intention to hire up to four students.

Study Deliverables

The Facilitator distributed a list showing the tentative study plan interim report schedule for December 2002 and January 2003 that had been provided to the Plenary Group at their last meeting (see Attachment 9 to this summary). Steve Ford explained that DWR is working on a deliverable schedule for the next six months but was still reconciling some discrepancies between dates included in the Gantt chart and dates included in the study plans.

V. Cumulative Issues Discussion

Terry Mills, DWR Environmental Resource Area Manager, described the need to continue discussion of cumulative issues and introduced three large mounted maps displaying other projects that may be considered for inclusion in the cumulative effects analysis based on the suggestions from Environmental Work Group participants at their September meeting. Steve Ford reviewed the contents of each map beginning with a regional map depicting most of California and including projects such as existing Central Valley hatcheries, and proposed and current CALFED activities such as Delta pump expansion plans, environmental water account programs, the Glenn Colusa Project, Sacramento River flood control planning, proposed Sites Reservoir location and the proposed raising of Shasta Dam. The second map focuses on the Feather River and Yuba River basins and includes locations of upper watershed projects such as the Poe and Upper North Fork Feather hydroelectric facilities, basin agricultural diversions and returns, and proposed changes to New Bullards Bar Dam, among others. The third map focuses on the Oroville Facilities Project Boundary and includes locations of existing recreation facilities, a mining project proposed near the Diversion Pool, and land use/ownership information. Participants were invited to review the maps during the meeting break. One participant asked if the maps could be made available to the Environmental Work Group or posted on the project web site and DWR responded that they would look into that possibility but the files are quite large and may be difficult to download.

Steve Ford reminded the participants that a draft Cumulative Effects/ESA guidance document was completed during the summer and noted that while DWR has not yet received the letter(s) by NMFS and United States Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) outlining their issues and additional guidance specific to the draft document, DWR intends to proceed with the steps outlined in the draft guidance document to begin cumulative effects analysis. Wayne Dyok, consultant to DWR informed the group that Steve Edmondson with NMFS had indicated to him that he felt NMFS had already provided adequate direction regarding cumulative effect assessment and did not plan to provide additional guidance. Eric Theiss offered that he thought DWR would be provided with the

NMFS letter within the next couple of weeks. Rich DeHaven representing FWS indicated that they are coordinating with NMFS and will be providing a similar letter soon.

VI. Data Management Presentation and Discussion

Shawn Pike with DWR provided an update on the status of data management and GIS layer development. He explained that delays have resulted from additional security requirements resulting from September 11 events but an internet portal should be available very soon, allowing participants to access data and GIS layers related to the relicensing process. He explained that the system is based on ARC IMS and is compatible with Internet Explorer. A training program for users outside of DWR is under consideration. Shawn explained that the data warehouse for archival and distribution uses the Interagency Ecological Program (IEP) system already in existence. This provides a public reference file function for information searches based on keywords, geographic area, report authors, publication dates, etc. Some of the information would be housed in a secure, password protected area, accessible on a limited basis. Other public domain information will be available for downloading or printing and users will have the ability to construct base maps that include GIS layers chosen by the user. He informed the participants that digital orthophoto quads are available on line as well as numerous other GIS layers and the database is growing continuously as new data is input.

Eric Theiss commented that NMFS would like to have all of the data made available as soon as possible and if the internet portal is not available, perhaps DWR could cut CDs. Shawn responded that they could cut CDs to include data of interest but cautioned Eric that the data changes frequently so the Internet portal would be the best option to view the latest data. The participants discussed the need to protect some of the data and Wayne Dyok offered that for other projects he has been involved with, data have been divided into publicly accessible data and sensitive data that have limited agency distribution. Shawn noted that one of the next additions to the site would be a public correspondence database. In responding to a request from NMFS, Steve Ford suggested that DWR could provide a protocol for data distribution within a week.

Wayne Dyok asked what the geographic boundaries for the data set are. Shawn responded that he believes they have information that includes a one-mile buffer around the existing project boundary. Nan Nalder representing the State Water Contractors reminded the participants of a FERC requirement to include information on the floodplain associated with the project and Wayne responded that the current boundary includes that area.

Chuck Hanson asked if all reports cited in literature reviews and studies will be available. Steve Ford responded that it was DWR's intention for key documents to be included but it does not intend to scan everything into the system and potential copyright implications need to be considered. Eric Theiss said he would send a letter to Rick Ramirez requesting this issue be brought before the Plenary Group. Steve offered to check with DWR legal counsel regarding copyright law and added that if a document is not scanned, the reader could still be directed how best to acquire the document.

VII. PM&E Development Process

Terry Mills introduced the PM&E development process with a presentation outlining the history and timeline for this effort (see Attachment 10 of this summary). He described the work currently underway by the Plenary Group's Process Protocol Task Force and asked if anyone that attended their first meeting was present that could provide the Environmental Work Group with a summary of their efforts thus far. Eric Theiss responded that NMFS was not happy with one goal of the Task Force and is preparing a memo regarding the proposed PM&E screening criteria under consideration indicating that any degree of constriction associated with pre-screening would be

unacceptable to NMFS. He pointed out that one of the screening criteria proposed suggested there be no redirected impacts, criteria he suggests is impossible to achieve. Mike Melanson representing Metropolitan Water District and another member of the Process Task Force thought that screening was necessary but agreed that no redirected impacts is an impossible and unrealistic goal. He expressed concerns that the Task Force was unable to make it though their meeting agenda and hopes that the next meeting would be more productive. Nan Nalder added that a framework for evaluating potential PM&Es is necessary so the participants can move forward with some direction and Terry suggested that a screening mechanism could be employed at the beginning or the end of a process such as this.

Terry suggested that some potential PM&E measures were included in Appendix B of Scoping Document 1 and perhaps the consulting team could begin culling these out as a good first step in developing a list of potential PM&Es for each resource area. The Facilitator pointed out that an effort to identify PM&E measures that have been proposed since the beginning of the relicensing process and contained within the Issue Tracker (Appendix B) has been initiated.

Next Steps / Meetings

Terry reminded the Environmental Work Group of the number of reports that will be reviewed in the near future and asked the participants for suggestions on how to improve and manage future Environmental Work Group meetings. Mike Melanson suggested that participants come to meetings prepared to provide their specific comments on documents and this effort would be assisted by the distribution of documents in advance of Work Group meetings. He also suggested study authors add an executive summary to each report that highlights the important points contained within. Nan Nalder suggested that each report should also include a contact name and phone number so participants could ask questions directly of the author.

Eric Theiss expressed concern that enough time may not be available to discuss each study report thoroughly and Wayne Dyok suggested that to more efficiently use meeting time, all comments could be submitted in written form with only core issues discussed during the Work Group meetings. Eric added that some issues might require additional consideration through technical task forces meetings or conference calls and he requested flexibility be maintained to accommodate additional meetings as necessary. He suggested a two-tiered comment approach where review and discussion of major issues are prioritized ahead of editorial comments. The participants agreed that these suggestions would be very helpful.

Terry suggested that in addition to the practice of distributing a draft meeting agenda for the upcoming monthly meeting when noticing a meeting, draft agendas for at least two months in advance also be distributed to Work Group participants for planning and prioritization purposes. The Environmental Work Group agreed to all of these suggestions. The next Environmental Work Group meeting will be:

Date: Wednesday, December 11, 2002
Time: 9:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
Location: Oroville Field Division

Action Items

The following action items identified by the Environmental Work Group includes a description of the action, the participant responsible for the action, and due date.

Action Item #E60: Written comments to Randy Brown on SP-F9 Literature Review
Responsible: Environmental Work Group participants
Due Date: December 20, 2002

Action Item #E61: Confirm coordination between SP-W7 and SP-LU1 and SP-LU2
Responsible: DWR
Due Date: December 11, 2002

Action Item #E62: Update NMFS on availability of data sets for download
Responsible: DWR
Due Date: November 27, 2002

Action Item #E63: Clarify copyright constraints for document scanning and availability
Responsible: DWR
Due Date: December 11, 2002

Action Item #E64: Cull potential PM&E measures from Scoping Document 2 Appendix B
Responsible: DWR/Consulting Team
Due Date: December 11, 2002

Action Item #E65: Include contact person and executive summary to interim and draft documents provided for review by Environmental Work Group
Responsible: DWR
Due Date: on-going

Action Item #E66: Develop Environmental Work Group agendas three months in advance for planning prioritization purposes
Responsible: DWR
Due Date: on-going